



16th Annual National HIV Testing Day

June 27, 2010

What is National HIV Testing Day?

The National Association of People With AIDS (NAPWA) started National HIV Testing Day in 1995. Every year, on June 27th, local organizations across the nation engage with communities to promote early diagnosis and HIV testing. The CDC estimates that 250,000 of the one million people living with HIV infection in the US are unaware of their status.

What is the significance of National Testing Day?

National HIV Testing Day is dedicated to encouraging people to find out their HIV status and helping those who are positive access treatment and reduce their risk of transmitting the virus to others. National HIV Testing Day also prevents new HIV infections by increasing education and awareness about the virus, and offering access to voluntary counseling and testing services.

Is HIV a problem in Louisiana?

- ⌘ As of March 31, 2010, there were over 17,500 people living with HIV infection in Louisiana.
 - ⌘ 39% were living in the New Orleans metro area, 25% in the Baton Rouge metro area
 - ⌘ 30% were female, 70% were male
- ⌘ In 2009, there were 1,262 new HIV diagnoses in Louisiana
 - ⌘ 32% were female, 68% were male
 - ⌘ 75% were black, 18% were white, and 5% were Hispanic
 - ⌘ Over 50% were among 'men who have sex with men' (MSM)
- ⌘ In 2008, 33% of people who were diagnosed with HIV were diagnosed with AIDS within 6 months of their diagnosis. Males, Hispanic/Latinos and persons over the age of 45 were more likely to have an AIDS diagnosis within 6 months. People who have an AIDS diagnosis within 6 months of their HIV diagnosis are considered to be "late testers" since they were diagnosed late in their disease progression.

Why is it important to get tested?

The CDC estimates that **21%** of people who are infected with HIV are unaware of their status. Using this estimate, there are over 4,500 people living in Louisiana with HIV who do not know that they are infected.

The sooner someone is diagnosed in their disease progression, the sooner they are able to begin treatment. A 2009 study (Loisna et al) found that persons with HIV who initiated treatment late had an additional 2.6 years of life lost.

There is solid evidence that people who learn of their HIV infection begin taking precautions to protect their partners, which can greatly reduce the further spread of HIV. People who learn they have HIV can then take the next steps to determine a proper course of treatment. Many new treatments considerably prolong life.

Those at advanced stages of infection are at risk of developing life-threatening conditions that do not infect people with healthy immune systems; but these very serious diseases are preventable by knowing your HIV status and following the appropriate treatment guidelines.

To find a testing site near you or for more information contact:

Online: www.HIV411.org OR www.hiv.dhh.louisiana.gov

Call: Louisiana Statewide HIV/STD Infoline: 1-800-99-AIDS-9 (1-800-992-4379)